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# The privilege of poverty. Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the struggle for a Franciscan rule for women. By Joan Mueller. Pp. x+182 incl. frontispiece and 8 ills. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. $40. 0 271 02893 9

Frances Andrews

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he has recently published a more extended study. C. Kroetzl, from the remarkable Tampere school of medieval historians, notes the growing attention from the mid-thirteenth century to the *fama* of sanctity. He uses the processes as sources for the history of communication and specifically of the spread of reputation (witnesses were asked about *fama*, and its diffusion can be estimated from their testimony). In a lively style untypical of the volume as a whole B. Schimmelpfennig reconstructs the ritual of papal canonisation. The main lines were fixed under Pope John XXII. T. Wetzstein makes it clear that an understanding of the *ius commune* is crucial to the 'Diplomatic' of canonisation processes: commissioners obeyed the procedural law of the Roman-Canonical process as it developed from the early thirteenth century. L. Smoller argues that local promoters in canonisation processes were able to affect the procedures used and thus the image of the saint. She contrasts investigations of Vincent Ferrer in Britanny on the one hand, and in Toulouse and Naples on the other. L. Pellegrini's thesis is that local canonisation investigations could take different forms but that the curial phase became more and more rigid in the fifteenth century; she attempts to work out a pattern in the choice of saints, suggesting that there was a policy of canonising all the protagonists of the agitated Schism past. M. Boiteux goes beyond the Middle Ages to explore the ceremonial and especially the visual effects surrounding the canonisation ritual in the early modern period. A concluding paper by Vauchez deserves especial attention. He is struck by how much procedures differed from one investigation to another. He asks why so few saints were canonised, and suggests that the papacy's real aim was to hold back the tide of the 'new sanctity' (cults of hermits, laypeople and friars in the mediterranean regions, and of bishops and pious sovereigns in the north); however, by the mid-thirteenth century the papacy realised that it did not have the means to control the cult of the saints, and concentrated on creating a class of super-saints. Vauchez suggests that around the same time popes also tried to establish a corresponding category of negative figures (for example the Visconti for John XXII). The final essay, by B. Ankarloo, develops the rather similar thought that the late medieval witchcraft trials were a sort of photo-negative of canonisation processes. The volume as a whole shows how efficiently the charisma of Vauchez's *opus magnum* has been routinised by a new generation of scholars.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON DAVID D'AVRAY

*The privilege of poverty. Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the struggle for a Franciscan rule for women*. By Joan Mueller. Pp. x + 182 incl. frontispiece and 8 ills. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. $40. 0 271 02893 9

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The title of this volume may lead those familiar with recent writing on Clare of Assisi and her followers to expect a contribution to a debate initiated in 1995 by Werner Maleczek on the dating and validity of the 'privilege of poverty', the exceptional permission to refuse property awarded to Clare and her community. In essence, Maleczek argued that the language and diplomatic form used in the privilege were

inappropriate for the chancery of Innocent III and proposed that the text may have been forged in the fifteenth century as a manoeuvre in disputes over reform. In the following year Niklaus Kustner questioned Maleczek's circumstantial case for the forgery, but there has not yet been a convincing response to Maleczek on his home territory of chancery language and diplomatics. This is not however the territory which interests Mueller. Although she cites the relevant articles in a note, she simply sidesteps the issue, dating the privilege to 1228 (Honorius III) and characterising it as 'falling in love with the poor Christ' (p. 106). Her concern is with a different controversy, that over the separation of women and men in the Franciscan order and the validity of a vow of poverty by the wealthy. She rejects either the male-only view of the early order (writing of 'Franciscan complementarity', p. 18), or that of what she identifies as 'feminist theorists' who suggest that the men 'arm-wrestled these women into cloistered silence' (p. viii). The book thus serves as a welcome account of the shifting relations between female Franciscans, their male brothers and prelates, and the struggle that male sacramental and practical responsibility for and to women created, placed in the context of the politics of the day. She suggests that men originally needed the women's houses as places for rest and respite, but that once they became more monastic, the women became a burden. The keys to success for the women were thus a 'politically adroit' Clare (p. ix) and Agnes's political weight, since she could and did negotiate with the popes, interceding on their behalf with her royal brother in exchange for papal concessions on her rule of life. The popes come off rather badly in this account, but Mueller succeeds in proposing a new angle on a familiar tale of contrasting viewpoints between women religious, determined to live utterly without temporal guarantees, and male clergy concerned for both their own respectability and the security and integrity of women religious. The author has produced a cluster of recent publications on the letters of Clare to Agnes (2001, 2003), material summarised and contextualised here in chapters iii, iv and vi. The same commendable, documentary approach is central to this volume. She reconstructs each moment in the careers of Clare, Agnes and their communities by juxtaposing the different sources (illustrated with images from the 'Clare panel', painted in 1283). She does too little however to recognise the difference between genres, or their limitations. Thus papal bulls are used alongside hagiographical and later narrative sources such as the Chronicle of the twenty-four Generals (mysteriously, the chronicle of the Franciscan, Salimbene, is listed as a secondary source). Some of the sources used were based on oral tradition or pious invention or, if we are being optimistic, on earlier texts. This does not make such material any less interesting, but it does make a discussion of its reliability for relating a sequence of events a *sine qua non*. The only source which is subjected to such detailed discussion is the second version of the life of Francis produced by Thomas of Celano in the 1240s, and that appears to be because it can be seen as an (inconvenient) *apologia* for the separation of the brothers and the sisters (p. 99) whose instigator, Crescentius, is described as 'an educated but old [!] man, remembered for his cruel and unrelenting campaign against the zealots' (p. 97). Most problematic of all, Mueller is too keen to encourage the reader to empathise with and admire the women. To take one early example among many, she tells us that on the day that Clare heard Francis preach and chose to convert, her friend Bona di Guelfuccio, was not present 'Clare [having] encouraged her go to Rome to observe Lent' (p. 7). Clare's role in persuading Bona (which might appear as evidence of a precocious leader) is not recorded in the

process of canonisation to which the footnote refers, which states only that Bona 'non fo presente, perché allora era andata ad Roma per fare la quarantena'. We are repeatedly told what 'Clare thought' or 'Agnes knew' or that popes were 'annoyed'. Similar imaginative insertions about inner feelings and reactions lead the author to assert that 'the thought of a marital arrangement, with its intrigue of money and power, sent a shiver through Clare's frame' (p. 8). The price of empathy here appears to be historical precision. Readers will make up their own minds about the importance of this, but in the opinion of this reviewer, extensive use of the sources brings with it a responsibility to acknowledge their limitations and to draw the lines clearly between what is the source and what is poetic licence, something the author simply does not do. That said, Mueller knows the texts intimately and although she is less secure on the wider background – using Van Cleve's 1972 study of Frederick II for the imperial context as though nothing had been published on the subject since – she brings to life a world which is at once fascinating and problematic.

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS FRANCES ANDREWS

*The holy bureaucrat. Eudes Rigaud and religious reform in thirteenth-century Normandy*. By Adam J. Davis. Pp. xiii + 268. Ithaca–London: Cornell University Press, 2006. £22.95 ($39.95). 13 978 0 8014 4474 6; 10 0 8014 4474 8

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Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen from 1248 to 1276, left a rich legacy for the historian of the thirteenth-century Church. For twenty-one years of his archiepiscopate, he kept a register recording details of his administration, especially of his visitations of the province, and also preserving copies of documents, letters to and from the king and the pope, and various statutes that the bishop wished to have to hand for easy reference. An edition of this register (BN, fonds latin MS 245) was published by Theodose Bonnin as long ago as 1852, and a translation of high quality (but not including all the documentary material) by Sydney M. Brown in 1964, cited respectively by Adam Davis as RV and RER. The diocese of Rouen also had a polyptych or census, dating from the time of Archbishop Pierre de Colmieu (1236–44), which listed the parishes, patrons, value of the benefices, number of parishioners, names of the incumbents and of the prelate who had instituted. This census was brought up to date and amended by Eudes's secretaries. Such a mass of material might daunt a faint heart; Adam Davis, however, has revelled in bringing Eudes, one might say, into the twenty-first century – there has been no biography of the archbishop since that of Pierre Andrieu-Guitrancourt which came out in 1938 – placing Eudes within the intellectual and reforming circles of his day in the light of recent research. Eudes was a reformer who saw visitation as the main instrument whereby he could attempt to implement the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council on pastoral care. A scholar from the University of Paris, he was one of a growing number of intellectuals, often friars or those in close sympathy with them, raised to the episcopate, whose aims were a better educated parish clergy, careful of their flocks, and living decent, if not always exemplary, lives. There was a certain contradiction of purpose between a bishop who was essentially a worldly